



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Clarification on the New Seasonal Closure of Bajo de Sico in the U.S. Caribbean

NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule to the Regulatory Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands modifying the Bajo de Sico Seasonal Closure. The final rule was published in the *Federal Register* on November 2, 2010 (75 FR 67247), and the provisions became effective December 2, 2010.

The final rule modified the Bajo de Sico seasonal closure from a 3-month closure to a 6-month closure, and prohibited fishing for and possession of Caribbean reef fish in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) portion of Bajo de Sico from October 1 through March 31, each year. In addition, fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited within the EEZ portion of Bajo de Sico year-round.

The final rule allows fishers to harvest species not managed by the Council, including highly migratory species (HMS) or other non-HMS coastal migratory pelagics.

The final rule also prohibited anchoring in the Bajo de Sico EEZ year-round. This final rule also added spear

to the list of allowable gears in the commercial sector of the Caribbean reef fish fishery.

For the 2010-2011 fishing year, Bajo de Sico will be closed for Caribbean reef fish from December 2, 2010, through March 31, 2011. For each consecutive year, starting with 2011-2012, the full 6-month closure, October 1 through March 31, will be in effect.

Need more information on these topics?

Frequently Asked Questions:

Management of Bajo de Sico off Puerto Rico's West Coast

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Bajo_de_Sico_FAQs_Nov2010.pdf at the Southeast Regional Office's Web page:
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information pertinent to the rule. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

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